Polio eradication

†1965. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that by the end of 2004, India had to become a polio-free country so that it would be included in the list of polio-free countries in the year 2007;

(b) if so, whether the target has been achieved by the country in this year; and

(c) if not, whether it will not damage the prestige of India in the world?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. Although India has not reached zero polio status by the end of year 2004, it has made significant progress in polio eradication. Intensified efforts made in India during 2004 resulted in 136 cases of polio being detected in the country during 2004 compared to 225 during 2003. The number of infected districts reduced from 87 in 2003 to 44 in 2004. This is the lowest number of polio cases and lowest number of infected districts ever in the country since polio eradication efforts were started.

(c) The progress made by India was appreciated at a meeting of the Health Ministers of the Asian polio-endemic countries held in Geneva during the first week of February, 2005. The international community was confident that India was on the right track to eradicate the disease very soon. This optimism regarding India amongst the international experts was due to the fact that India had localized the disease to the smallest geographical area ever and the country was taking appropriate steps towards polio eradication.

Mobile public call office in trains

1966. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that BSNL has initiated mobile public call office in trains;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.